

Fast Facts

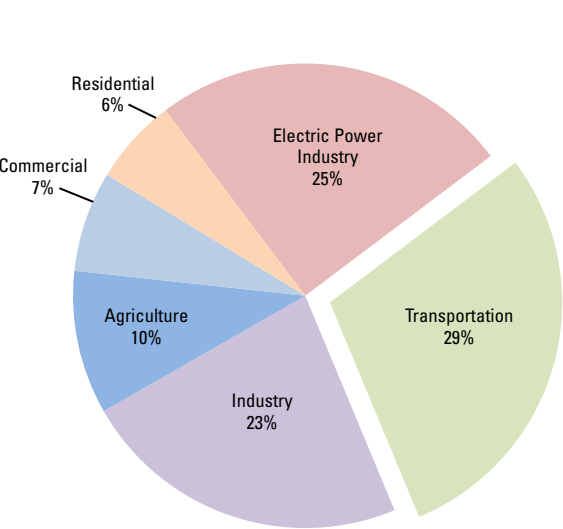
U.S. Transportation Sector Greenhouse Gas Emissions 1990–2019



Transportation Emissions of the United States

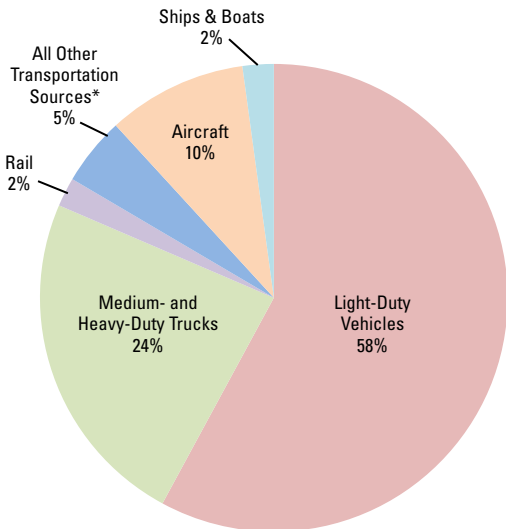
The transportation sector is one of the largest contributors to anthropogenic greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the United States. According to the *Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks 1990–2019* (the Inventory), the national inventory that the U.S. prepares annually under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the transportation sector accounted for the largest portion (29%) of total U.S. GHG emissions in 2019. Cars, trucks, commercial aircraft, and railroads, among other sources, all contribute to transportation end-use sector emissions. Within the sector, light-duty vehicles (including passenger cars and light-duty trucks) were by far the largest category, with 58% of GHG emissions, while medium- and heavy-duty trucks made up the second largest category, with 24% of emissions. Between 1990 and 2019, GHG emissions in the transportation sector increased more in absolute terms than any other sector (i.e. electricity generation, industry, agriculture, residential, commercial), due in large part to increased demand for travel.

Greenhouse gas emissions from transportation sources include carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), and various hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). CO₂, CH₄, and N₂O are all emitted via the combustion of fuels, while HFC emissions are the result of leaks and end-of-life disposal from air conditioners used to cool people and/or freight.²



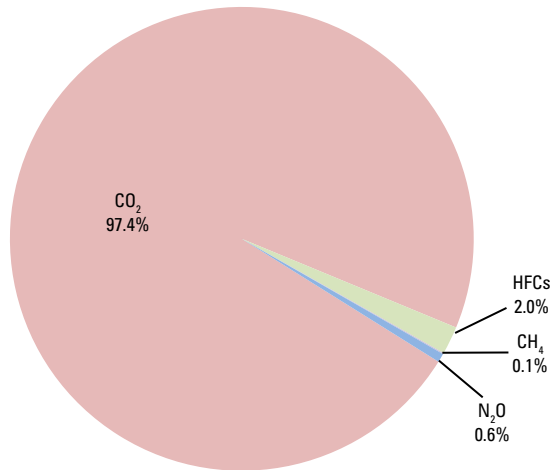
Share of U.S. GHG Emissions by Sector, 2019^{3,4}

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.



Share of U.S. Transportation Sector GHG Emissions by Source, 2019^{4,5}

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.



Share of U.S. Transportation Sector GHG Emissions by Gas, 2019⁴

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Mobile Sources	
Transportation	Non-Transportation Mobile
Highway Vehicles	Agricultural Equipment
Aircraft	Construction & Mining Equipment
Ships & Boats	Lawn & Garden Equipment
Rail	Logging Equipment
Lubricants	Recreational Equipment
Pipelines ¹	

When including emissions from *non-transportation* mobile sources such as agricultural, lawn and garden, and construction equipment, mobile sources constituted 32% of total U.S. GHG emissions in 2019.

¹ Pipeline emissions in the transportation sector include only CO₂ from the combustion of natural gas at compressor stations that power natural gas pipelines, not emissions from electricity use, non-CO₂ gases, or other types of pipeline equipment. Not that natural gas pipeline compressor stations are stationary equipment that are included in the transportation sector, but are not considered mobile sources.

² CO₂ emissions from the combustion of biofuels are not directly included in the energy sector contribution (which includes the contribution of transportation and non-transportation mobile sources) to U.S. totals in the Inventory; instead, net carbon fluxes from changes in biogenic carbon reservoirs are accounted in the estimates for Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry in the Inventory. See Page 4 for more information on the Inventory.

³ For presentation purposes, emissions from territories which constitute less than 1% of the total U.S. GHG emissions, are not shown in this chart, although they are included in the total emissions used to calculate the percentage share of emissions from each sector. See Table ES-6 in the Executive Summary of the Inventory for official data. See page 4 for more information on the Inventory.

⁴ "Transportation" emissions in these pie charts include CO₂, N₂O, CH₄, and HFCs from transportation sources like highway vehicles, aircraft, ships and boats, rail, pipelines and lubricants. They do not include emissions from non-transportation mobile sources such as agriculture and construction equipment.

⁵ "Other" sources include buses, motorcycles, pipelines, and lubricants.

U.S. Transportation GHG Emissions (Tg CO₂ Equivalent)

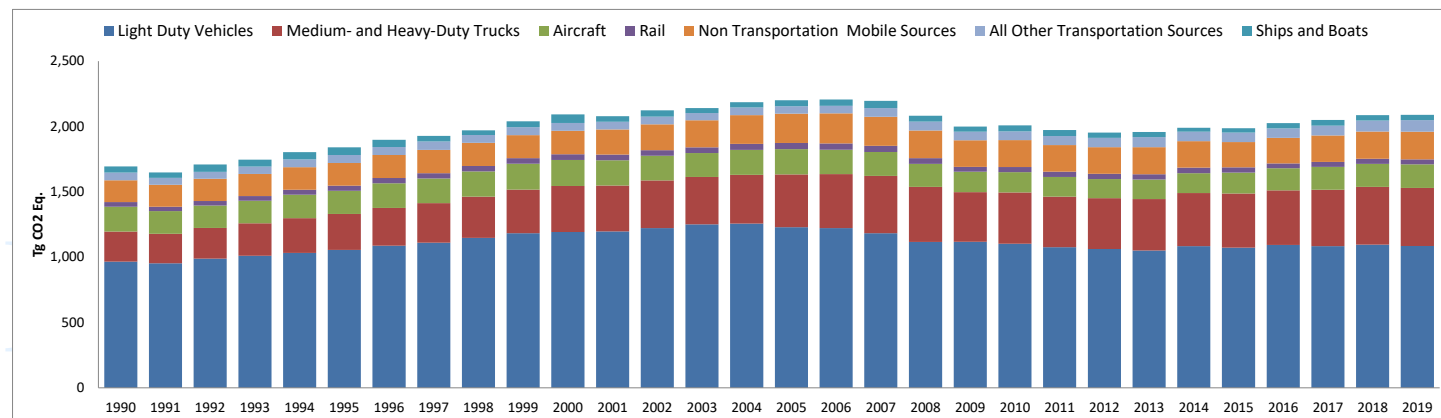
Change from
1990 to 2019

Source	1990	2005	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Absolute	Percent
On-Road Vehicles⁶	1,206.8	1,647.4	1,510.5	1,534.6	1,540.7	1,563.9	1,555.7	348.9	28.9
Passenger Cars	639.6	691.7	752.5	763.5	760.6	770.3	762.3	122.8	19.2
Light-Duty Trucks	326.7	537.7	320.9	330.2	324.3	325.7	323.1	-3.6	-1.1
Motorcycles	1.7	1.6	3.7	3.9	3.8	3.8	3.6	1.9	111.4
Buses	8.5	12.3	19.6	19.1	20.6	22.0	22.2	13.7	162
Medium- and Heavy-Duty Trucks	230.3	404.1	413.9	417.9	431.4	442.1	444.4	214.1	92.9
Aircraft	189.2	193.6	160.5	169.0	174.8	175.5	181.1	-8.1	-4.3
Commercial Aviation	110.9	134.0	120.1	121.5	129.2	130.8	135.4	24.5	22.1
Military Aircraft	35.3	19.5	13.6	12.4	12.3	11.9	12.0	-23.3	-66.1
General Aviation	42.9	40.1	26.8	35.1	33.3	32.8	33.7	-9.3	-21.6
Ships and Boats	47.0	45.4	33.8	40.8	43.9	41.2	40.4	-6.6	-14.0
Rail	35.8	46.6	40.3	36.8	38.1	39.9	37.6	1.8	4.9
Pipelines⁷	36.0	32.4	38.5	39.2	41.3	49.9	53.7	17.7	49.2
Lubricants	11.8	10.2	11.0	10.4	9.6	9.2	8.9	-3.0	-24.9
Transportation Total	1,526.6	1,975.6	1,794.6	1,830.7	1,848.3	1,879.6	1,877.4	350.8	23.0

U.S. Non-Transportation Mobile GHG Emissions

Non-Transportation Mobile⁸	167.3	224.9	192.4	195.4	201.9	207.6	211.5	44.2	26.4
Agricultural Equip.	44.8	52.6	42.4	41.4	41.0	41.0	40.8	-4.0	-8.9
Construction Equip.	50.3	78.5	58.7	61.8	67.0	70.2	72.3	22.0	43.7
Other	72.2	93.8	91.3	92.2	93.9	96.4	98.4	26.2	36.3
Non-Transportation + Transportation Total	1,693.9	2,200.5	1,987.0	2,026.0	2,050.2	2,087.2	2,088.9	395.0	23.3

Change in GHG Emissions by Source: 1990–2019



U.S. Transportation GHG Emissions by Gas, 2019 (Tg CO₂ Equivalent)

Source	CO ₂	CH ₄	N ₂ O	HFCs	Total	Percent
On-Road Vehicles⁶	1,512.7	0.9	9.3	32.7	1,555.7	74.5
Passenger Cars	748.3	0.4	4.4	9.3	762.3	36.5
Light-Duty Trucks	304.3	0.2	1.7	16.9	323.1	15.5
Motorcycles	3.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.6	0.2
Buses	21.4	0.2	0.1	0.4	22.2	1.1
Medium- and Heavy-Duty Trucks	435.2	0.1	3.0	6.1	444.4	21.1
Aircraft	179.4	0.0	1.6	0.0	181.1	8.7
Commercial Aviation	134.2	0.0	1.2	0.0	135.4	6.5
Military Aircraft	11.9	0.0	0.1	0.0	12.0	0.6
General Aviation	33.3	0.0	0.3	0.0	33.7	1.6
Ships and Boats	35.9	0.4	0.2	3.9	40.4	1.9
Rail	37.1	0.1	0.3	0.1	37.6	1.8
Pipelines⁷	53.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	53.7	2.6
Lubricants	8.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.9	0.4
Transportation Total	1,827.8	1.4	11.5	36.7	1,877.4	89.9

Rail Electricity	3.07	0.00	0.06	0.00	3.14	NA
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U.S. Non-Transportation Mobile GHG Emissions by Gas, 2019

Non-Transportation Mobile⁸	204.1	0.9	6.5	0.0	211.5	10.1
Agricultural Equip.	39.7	0.1	1.1	0.0	40.8	2.0
Construction Equip.	70.3	0.2	1.9	0.0	72.3	3.5
Other	94.1	0.6	3.6	0.0	98.4	4.7
Non-Transportation + Transportation Total	2,031.8	2.4	18.0	36.7	2,088.9	100.0

⁶ GHG emissions and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) estimates for on-road vehicles presented in the Inventory are based on Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) data. In 2011 FHWA changed its methods for estimated VMT and related data, leading to a shift in emissions among on-road vehicle classes. These methodological changes included how vehicles are classified, moving some smaller trucks and sport utility vehicles from the light truck category to the passenger vehicle category in this Inventory. These changes in VMT data by vehicle class were first incorporated in the 1990 through 2008 Inventory and apply to the 2007 to 2019 time period.

⁷ Includes only CO₂ from natural gas used to power natural gas pipelines; does not include emissions from electricity use or non-CO₂ gases.

⁸ Note: non-transportation CO₂ emissions estimates are presented here and in Annex 3.2 of the Inventory for informational purposes, but these emissions are officially accounted for in other energy sectors in the Inventory (i.e., industrial, residential, commercial sectors) using a different method. See Annex 3.2 of the Inventory for more information.

2019 Fuel Consumption

	Volume (billion gallons unless otherwise specified)	Energy (Tbtu)	CO ₂ (Tg)
MOTOR GASOLINE	129.5	16,079.1	1,136.0
Transportation⁹			
Passenger Cars	84.5	10,505.5	742.3
Light-Duty Trucks	32.9	4,091.7	289.1
Medium- and Heavy-Duty Trucks	4.6	567.4	40.1
Motorcycles	0.4	50.6	3.6
Buses	0.1	14.2	1.0
Recreational Boats	1.2	151.7	10.7
Non-Transportation Mobile¹⁰			
Agricultural Equipment	0.1	15.6	1.1
Construction Equipment	0.4	46.5	3.3
Other Non-Transportation Mobile	5.3	635.9	44.8
DISTILLATE FUEL	60.1	8,335.4	618.0
Transportation⁹			
Passenger Cars	0.4	61.6	4.6
Light-Duty Trucks	1.4	200.7	14.9
Buses	1.9	260.3	19.3
Medium- and Heavy-Duty Trucks	38.4	5,324.6	394.8
Recreational Boats	0.3	39.2	2.9
Ships and Boats	0.7	101.9	7.6
Rail	3.6	500.2	37.1
Non-Transportation Mobile¹⁰			
Agricultural Equipment	3.7	519.0	38.5
Construction Equipment	6.5	896.5	66.5
Other Non-Transportation Mobile	3.1	431.4	32.0
RESIDUAL FUEL OIL	1.3	196.0	14.7
Ships and Boats	1.3	196.0	14.7
JET FUEL	18.2	2,461.9	177.8
Commercial Aircraft	14.1	1907.8	134.2
General Aviation Aircraft	3.0	403.2	31.7
Military Aircraft	1.1	150.9	11.9
AVIATION GASOLINE	0.2	23.4	1.6
General Aviation Aircraft	0.2	23.4	1.6
ELECTRICITY (Billion Kilowatt hours)	11.7	39.8	4.7
Transportation			
Passenger Cars	3.5	11.9	1.4
Light-Duty Trucks	0.5	1.8	0.2
Buses	0.1	0.2	0.0
Agricultural Equipment	7.6	25.8	3.1

	Volume (billion gallons unless otherwise specified)	Energy (Tbtu)	CO ₂ (Tg)
NATURAL GAS (billion cubic feet)	1,046.6	1,086.4	57.5
Transportation			
Passenger Cars	0.1	0.1	0.0
Light-Duty Trucks	0.2	0.2	0.0
Medium- and Heavy-Duty Trucks	0.8	0.8	0.0
Buses	17.6	18.3	1.0
Pipelines	978.6	1,015.8	53.7
Non-Transportation Mobile¹⁰			
Agricultural Equipment	1.5	1.6	0.1
Construction Equipment	6.3	6.6	0.3
Other Non-Transportation Mobile	41.5	43.0	2.3
LPG	2.7	249.3	15.7
Transportation			
Passenger Cars	0.0	0.0	0.0
Light-Duty Trucks	0.0	1.2	0.1
Medium- and Heavy-Duty Trucks	0.1	4.8	0.3
Buses	0.0	1.6	0.1
Non-Transportation Mobile¹⁰			
Agricultural Equipment	0.0	0.0	0.0
Construction Equipment	0.0	2.5	0.2
Other Non-Transportation Mobile	2.6	239.3	15.0
LUBRICANTS	0.0	1.0	8.9
Total¹¹	220.8	28,472.3	2,034.9

BIOFUELS¹²	15.4	1,381.3	95.8
Transportation			
<i>Biodiesel</i>	<i>1.8</i>	<i>231.3</i>	<i>17.1</i>
<i>Ethanol</i>	<i>13.6</i>	<i>1,150.2</i>	<i>78.7</i>

⁹ Excludes contributions from biofuels.

¹⁰ Non-transportation mobile fuel consumption, energy, and CO₂ are estimated based in part on the MOVES-Nonroad model (see www.epa.gov/moves). Because the fuel consumption in MOVES-Nonroad is intended to reflect real-world usage, these estimates may include low-level ethanol blends. Note that these estimates are presented here and in Annex 3.2 of the Inventory for informational purposes, but that non-transportation mobile source CO₂ emissions are officially accounted for in other energy sectors in the Inventory (e.g., the industrial sector) using a different method and do not include emissions from biofuels.

¹¹ Total Volume is the sum of physical (billion) gallons of fuel; because natural gas volumes are reported as million cubic feet, natural gas volumes are converted to billion gallons of gasoline equivalent for the Total Volume (billion gallons) sum in this table.

¹² Biofuels are presented as line items below the total for informational purposes only, in line with IPCC methodological guidance and UNFCCC reporting obligations. Biofuel estimates only reflect transportation sources and do not include biofuels used in non-transportation mobile sources, e.g., ethanol used in commercial or industrial applications. CO₂ emissions from the combustion of biofuels are not directly included in the energy sector contribution (which includes the contribution of transportation sources) to U.S. totals in the Inventory; instead, net carbon fluxes from changes in biogenic carbon reservoirs are accounted in the estimates for Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry in the Inventory. See page 4 for more information on the Inventory.

Additional Information

Data Sources for This Document

The source for all data in this document is the *Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks 1990–2019* (EPA 2021). The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency prepares the inventory annually to fulfill the U.S. commitment under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), using calculation methods that are consistent with guidelines from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Complete information on the inventory is available at: www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/inventory-us-greenhouse-gas-emissions-and-sinks. The inventory methods and assumptions related to transportation and non-transportation mobile sources are available in the main body of the Inventory as well as Annex 3.2 of the Inventory.

Inventory Definitions of Selected Transportation Categories¹³



Passenger Cars:¹⁴ automobiles used primarily to transport 12 people or less. In 2019, passenger cars traveled a total of 2,254,309 million vehicle miles.



Light-Duty Trucks:¹⁴ vehicles used primarily for transporting light-weight cargo or which are equipped with special features such as four-wheel drive for off-road operation. In the U.S., this category also includes many vehicles that primarily transport passengers such as sport utility vehicles (SUVs) and minivans. The gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) normally ranges around 8,500 pounds or less. GVWR is the maximum weight a vehicle is designed to carry when passengers, fuel, cargo, and any other additions to the vehicle are accounted for. In 2019, light-duty trucks traveled a total of 669,744 million vehicle miles.



Medium- and Heavy-Duty Trucks:¹⁴ vehicles with GVWR of more than around 8,500 pounds. In the Inventory, single unit trucks and combination trucks represent the medium- and heavy-duty truck category, including tractor-trailers and box trucks used for freight transportation. In addition, this category includes some vehicles that are not typically used for freight movement such as service and utility trucks. In 2019, medium- and heavy-duty trucks traveled a total of 318,030 million vehicle miles.



Pipelines: systems that transport liquids, gases, or slurries through either above or below ground pipes. In the Inventory, the pipelines category includes emissions from the combustion of natural gas used to power pumps and other distribution equipment, while leaks and other emissionsources from pipelines are assigned to the natural gas systems category.

Emissions Metrics

A teragram (Tg) is equal to 1 million metric tons.

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are measured in this document in terms of teragrams of “carbon dioxide equivalent” (CO₂ Eq); an “equivalent” refers to the Global Warming Potential (GWP) of a greenhouse gas. GWP values are determined based on the chosen time horizon and properties of the gas, such as its ability to absorb radiation and its atmospheric lifetime. CO₂ has a GWP of “1”; all other greenhouse gases have GWP values relative to that of CO₂. For example, methane (CH₄) has a radiative forcing value or GWP of 25, which means that releasing one ton of (CH₄) is equivalent to releasing 25 tons of CO₂.

The data in this document is based on the 100-year time horizon GWP values from the IPCC’s Fourth Assessment Report¹⁵, in accordance with UNFCCC reporting guidelines for national GHG inventories. More information on greenhouse gases and GWP is available at: www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/overview-greenhouse-gases.

¹³ The data used to estimate emissions for specific transportation categories may not directly align with the Inventory’s definition of the categories; both the data and Inventory definitions may also differ from EPA’s regulatory definitions for the same categories.

¹⁴ GHG emissions and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) estimates for on-road vehicles presented in the Inventory are based on Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) data. In 2011 FHWA changed its methods for estimated VMT and related data, leading to a shift in emissions among on-road vehicle classes. These methodological changes included how vehicles are classified, moving some smaller trucks and sport utility vehicles from the light truck category to the passenger vehicle category in this Inventory. These changes in VMT data by vehicle class were first incorporated in the 1990 through 2008 Inventory and apply to the 2007 to 2019 time period.

¹⁵ See www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/syr/ar4_syr.pdf.